

Amendment to the Specification

Please replace paragraph [0061] with the following.

[0061] Fig. 5 shows the load absorbing metal sheet 12 which is a stamping. A first section "A" [[if]] of Fig. 5 depicts the metal sheet 12 in a condition ready for mounting. A second section "B" of Fig 5 depicts the metal sheet 12 in a condition after an actuation of both load absorbers 8 and 9.

Please replace paragraph [0072] with the following.

[0072] In summary, the embodiment example of the present invention illustrated in FIGS. 6 to 8 can be explained as follows: Steering column pipes that can be telescoped are provided with "ring pistons" which shorten the steering column by means of a pyrotechnic pressure set-up or building in between in the case of small drivers and therewith bring an inflating air bag to a larger distance. In one of the ring pistons a load absorbing mechanism is integrated which becomes effective in the case of tall drivers instead of the steering column shortening and is taken out of service by means of pyrotechnic pressure in the case of small drivers. The second ring piston is provided with a load absorbing mechanism. The shown example deals with correspondingly formed and mounted inclineable cutters or knifes. Herein corrugated tubes, material deforming balls or the like (not shown in the figures) may be also used. Basically, the function of the load absorbing ring piston is in such a way that the piston automatically absorbs or reduces load if the inner steering column pipe is moved relatively to the outer one. In the shown case, the cutter is machiningly or chip-detachingly pressed in the outer steering column pipe. Alternatively, this load absorbency can be "skipped" in the case of a pyrotechnic ignition with corresponding power or the "cutter" is inclined out of service by a pressure influenced treated-control pin 44 according to the examples as shown in the respective figures Fig. 7.

Please replace paragraph [0073] with the following.

[0073] In the steering column of a motor vehicle the inner and outer steering column pipe is designed, for example, with a difference in diameter as large as possible. As it is common today amongst other things, the outer steering column pipe is positioned in bearings (not shown in the figures). The inner steering column pipe is connected to the outer one form-fittingly via e.g. grooves ~~or general form~~ with corresponding ring pistons. The ring piston pair is connected, for example, by clinching with an outer and an inner pipe each. A ring piston includes a pyrotechnic charge the pressure of which pushes the ring pistons away from each other and therewith shortens the steering column or is able to pull the steering wheel in driving direction to the front away from the passenger.

Please replace paragraph [0087] with the following.

[0087] An inventive further development lies in the design of the pistons. The pistons have a reverse lock. In the load cases mentioned above, at first ~~in which~~ the steering column is shot to the front~~[[,]~~ ~~[[the]]~~ The load absorbers are unlocked and are in an unutilized state leave over a part of their lengths. In the final phase of an accident the pointed front wall or dash panel possibly moves in the direction of the steering column. The pistons with reverse lock prevent a pushing back of the steering column to the back. In this case the load absorbers are crushed or bent away outside of the sled casing.